

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for production of metal chloride in which chlorine gas is reacted with raw material including metal oxide or metal to chlorinate, the apparatus comprising:

a chlorination furnace in which the raw material is held and chlorinated by chlorine gas, and

a distributor which is arranged at the bottom of the chlorination furnace and which supplies and disperses chlorine gas into the chlorination furnace, wherein the distributor comprises a bed packed by ~~pure ceramic particles~~ fused silica particles or silicon nitride particles having a purity of not less than 99.5% and having a porosity of not more than 0.1%.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 1,

wherein the distributor comprises a plate having many openings on a plate, and the bed packed ~~pure ceramic particles~~ by the fused silica particles or silicon nitride particles to which chlorine gas is introduced through the plate.

3. (Currently amended) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 2,

wherein the distributor further comprises ~~the plate and~~ a cylindrical vessel arranged on the plate, and wherein an anticorrosive material for

chlorine gas is closely laid along the inner wall of the cylindrical vessel.

4. (Previously Presented) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 3,

wherein the anticorrosive material for chlorine gas closely laid along an inner wall of the cylindrical vessel comprises discrete segmental plate with which are mutually combined, and

wherein each segment has a convex and concave attachments at both ends thereof, the convex portion of the segment is unified to a concave portion of another segment, and the segments are laid horizontally along the whole inner wall of the vessel.

5. (Original) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 4,

wherein a joint of the segments continuously connected along the inner wall of the vessel, and the connected segments is further piled up vertically as the multi-piled wall along the inner wall of the vessel.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 3,

wherein the inner wall of the vessel is covered by the anticorrosive material for chlorine gas.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently amended) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 1, wherein the equivalent diameter of ~~ceramic particle~~ the fused silica particles or the silicon nitride particles packed in the bed on the distributor is in a range from 5 to 100 mm.

9. (Currently amended) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 1,

wherein bulk density of the ~~ceramic particle~~ of fused silica particles or the silicon nitride particles packed in the bed on the distributor is in a range from 1 to 5 g/cm³.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 3,

wherein the anticorrosive material for chlorine gas comprises fused silica, silicon nitride, or alumina.

11. (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim ~~10~~ 3,

wherein the purity of the ~~ceramic material~~ anti-corrosive material for chlorine gas covering the inner wall of the cylindrical vessel in the distributor is not less than 99.5% and the porosity is in a range from 5 to 15%.

13-17 (Canceled).

18. (New) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 1, wherein the bed is packed by fused silica particles.

19. (New) The apparatus for production of metal chloride according to claim 1, wherein the bed is packed by silicon nitride particles.